

Dear Senator Reilly,

I am a resident of District #33 and a member of Showing Up for Racial Justice Annapolis and Anne Arundel County. I am testifying in support of bill **SB0626** which sets statutory Limits on Police Use of Force. I've lived in Anne Arundel county since 2005, and have become motivated to act on behalf of my community members to encourage the objective reduction of police use of force.

While I was horrified by the deaths of Eric Garner in New York and George Floyd in Minnesota, I have been trying to follow this issue locally. I appreciate Anne Arundel County Police Department's transparency in providing Use-of-Force statistics since 2012—it's a good start and just good public policy. And I really appreciated former Chief Altomare's condemnation of the killing of George Floyd. I've attended some of the County Executive's virtual town halls including Chief Altomare, who was clearly interested in working with citizens on this issue.

Even though Anne Arundel County began making changes to their use-of-force policy since a lawsuit last year, it doesn't make sense to have a patchwork of local and federal use-of-force policies, while having that gap at the state level.

As one of the 9 states with no statutory language limiting police use of force, Maryland's police are only regulated by federal and local law. This means of all places, by law Maryland police have more freedom than most states to brutalize its citizens with impunity. Currently, Use of Force in Maryland is governed by two Supreme Court cases *Graham v Connor* (1989) and *Tennessee v Garner* (1985). However, *no state or federal law meets international standards for police use of force.*

A meaningful police use of force statute needs to 1) make use of force acceptable only when "necessary" (rather than when "reasonable" as federal law states); 2) ban certain holds; 3) define "use of force" and delineate alternative actions; 4) limit on when officers can claim self-defense if their behavior incited the necessity to use force; 5) duty to de-escalate and to intervene with fellow officers; and 6) require police departments to enact policies to limit use of force against certain vulnerable people, including those who have mental/behavioral impairments and those who speak limited English. We are very pleased to see that this bill includes all of these components.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote in support of **SB0626**.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Rebecca Benzer
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